

APPENDIX M

North Pacific Fishery Management Council Comprehensive Management Goals

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Comprehensive Fishery Management Goals



Prepared by the staff of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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COMPREHENSIVE FISHERY MANAGEMENT GOALS

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INTRODUCTION

The nine Comprehensive Fishery Management Goals which the Council adopted on December 7, 1984 are intended to convey targets for future Council action -- a sense of direction for the course of fishery management over the next decade. They must be considered as an integrated whole, not as separable elements, and some address values conflicting with those in other goals. The order of listing does not imply priority.

These Comprehensive Goals will serve as a basic framework for fishery-by-fishery development of specific goals, operational objectives, and strategies for ultimate incorporation into fishery management plans. All goals should be considered in the context of the amplifying statements, issues and concerns appended to them.

The Council fully accepts and endorses the purposes, policies, and seven National Standards mandated by the Congress in the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MFCMA). Briefly summarized, these National Standards require that the Council and its Fishery Management Plans (FMPs):

1. will not allow overfishing, and will manage for optimum yield;
2. will use the best available scientific information;
3. will manage a stock throughout its range;
4. will not discriminate among residents of different states;
5. will promote efficient utilization of fishery resources;
6. will be flexible;
7. will manage in a cost-effective fashion.

The Council's Comprehensive Goals are consistent with these national mandates, and are intended to supplement and apply them to specific issues and needs of the Region. Because socio-economic aspects of fishery development in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea require particularly complex and difficult decisions, a major proportion of Council Goals address the need for amplification of the National Standards as applied to these aspects. In this context, consistent with the MFCMA, the term "United States fishing industry" refers to the full range of economic activities that are related to the harvesting, processing, marketing, and transportation of fish by nationals and vessels of the United States.

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Following is an explanation of how these goals will be employed in the Council's planning processes.

As the Council develops amendments to management plans and promulgates regulations governing related fisheries, it will be mindful of its responsibility to assure future productivity of fish stocks by guarding against overfishing, protecting critical habitat, and taking into account the varied interactions of those stocks with other elements of the ecosystem (Goal 1). At the same time, the Council will support the stability and economic well-being of the fishing industry and the communities dependent upon that industry. Contributing goals include optimum U.S. utilization of Alaska's fishery resources through domestic harvesting, processing, and distribution (Goal 4); assurance of stability of fishery management processes to promote reasonable returns from investments in the fishery (Goal 7); and providing opportunities for maritime communities to participate in these economic and social benefits (Goal 3). In addition, the Council has an obligation both to the fishing industry and the general public to conduct its business efficiently -- to develop high quality information bases for decision-making, and to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of the entire decision-making process (Goals 8 and 9).

Beyond question, the Council's most difficult decisions usually will concern allocation of harvest privileges among competing users. Here the Council will seek to minimize the negative impacts on established fisheries of developing fisheries for underutilized species by the U.S. industry (Goal 6). Maintenance of traditional fisheries is important to the well-being of maritime communities and to the stability of the economic market place, and to the degree possible, development of fisheries for underutilized resources should not interfere with those established fisheries. While the Council recognizes the inevitability of competition among users for a limited resource, the Council expects each fishery to develop harvest techniques which avoid needless by-catch waste of non-target species, and which minimize interference with other fisheries that depend upon the same species or fish the same grounds (Goal 5).

Finally, while the Council intends that its management practices and decisions provide all possible encouragement for a healthy and prosperous domestic fishing industry, the Council also is mindful of its responsibilities as custodian of a valuable portion of the Nation's publicly-owned resources, and the attendant responsibility to manage those resources for the benefit of society as a whole (Goal 2).

FINDINGS BY THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
REGARDING FISHERY MANAGEMENT POLICY

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council finds the following:

1. Marine and anadromous fish off Alaska, which comprise approximately 80% of the total fishery resources in the U.S. Fishery Conservation Zone, are a valuable and renewable natural resource which contributes significantly to the food supply, economy, health and recreational opportunities of the Region and the Nation.
2. The fishery resources off Alaska are the property of the United States and should be managed for the benefit of everyone in the U.S. in accordance with the provisions of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act.
3. The common property nature of fishery resources tends to cause over-capitalization in the industry, increases the chances of resource depletion, and decreases the incentive for conservation of the resource by the users.
4. Because fishery resources are limited, proper management requires allocation of fishery resources among users.
5. Commercial and recreational fisheries are a major source of employment and significant contributors to the economy of the Region and Nation. Full domestic utilization of resources off Alaska would increase their contribution and lessen the Nation's foreign trade imbalance by reducing domestic dependence on imported fish products.
6. The lack of timely and adequate data has hampered decision-making and management to the detriment of the resource and the economy.
7. Management of the fishery resources off Alaska requires consideration of all components of the ecosystem, including birds and mammals.
8. The existing administrative process of management should be more timely and responsive and regional fisheries management and policy development should be fully embodied in the Council as intended by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act.
9. Clearly specified goals and objectives are necessary for development of a regional management system that will conserve and fully utilize the Region's fishery resources.

Statement of Goals

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND MANAGE FISHERY RESOURCES OF THE REGION TO ASSURE LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY OF INDIGENOUS MARINE AND ANADROMOUS FISH STOCKS, MAINTENANCE OF HABITAT QUALITY AND QUANTITY, AND FULL CONSIDERATION FOR INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE ECOSYSTEM.

This goal ensures, first and foremost, that marine fish and related resources are properly protected and, whenever advantageous, enhanced.

This goal serves Purpose 1 of Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act [Sec. 2(b)(1)], which is, "to conserve and manage the fishery resources found off the coasts of the United States, and the anadromous species and Continental Shelf fishery resources of the United States . . ." As set out in the Act, "conservation and management" refers to all the rules, regulations, conditions, methods, and other measures (A) which are required to rebuild, restore, or maintain . . . any fishery resource and the marine environment; and (B) which are designed to assure that (i) a supply of food and their products may be taken, and that recreational benefits may be obtained, on a continuing basis; (ii) irreversible or long-term adverse effects on fishery resources and the marine environment are avoided; and (iii) there will be a multiplicity of options available with respect to future uses of these resources." [Sec. 3(2)]

Issues and concerns that may be addressed under this goal include:

- (1) management practices
 - a. preventing overfishing
 - b. rebuilding depleted fish stocks
 - c. minimizing waste of resources as by-catch
 - d. maintaining the integrity and stock strength of individual species
 - e. stock enhancement
- (2) habitat quality
 - a. minimizing damage by fishing gear
 - b. reducing losses of fish, marine mammals and birds, due to derelict fishing gear and other marine debris
 - c. concerns for coastal development impacts on critical habitats
 - d. concerns for OCS developments: potential pollution and habitat destruction
 - e. concerns for freshwater habitats of anadromous species
- (3) food chain interdependency
 - a. impacts of management on marine mammals and birds
 - b. impacts of management on food chains--shifting prey-predator relations, etc.

GOAL 2: ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES BENEFIT FROM OPTIMUM UTILIZATION OF THE NATION'S PUBLICLY-OWNED FISHERY RESOURCES.

This goal recognizes public ownership of fishery resources and the obligation therefore to serve the public interest under the optimum yield concept defined in MFCMA.^{1/} It requires that fishery resources available for harvesting make the highest possible contribution to the economic and social development of the people of the United States. Its achievement requires recognition of diverse public concerns for securing consumer products at reasonable prices; access to recreational opportunities; achievement of economic viability for the fishing industry and supporting community services for the social and economic benefit of the Nation; and minimal public costs of resource management.^{2/} Under this goal, the Council accepts the need to consider overall public benefits in allocation of resource uses, and the need to develop improved effort controls as management tools.

Issues and concerns that may be addressed under this goal include:

1. production of high quality fish products over the maximum season at acceptable prices;
2. provision for recreational and subsistence opportunities;
3. economic self-sufficiency and viability of the domestic fishing industry and supporting infrastructure (cf. Goals 4 and 5);
4. increased domestic fishery utilization and resultant reductions in negative balance of payments (cf. Goal 3);
5. generation of reasonable economic rent^{3/} from utilization of publicly-owned resources;
6. positive benefit-cost ratio for public management operations.

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1. MFCMA National Standard 1 [Sec. 301(a)(1)] states:
"Conservation and management measures shall prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery." Optimum yield is defined [Sec. 3(18)] as follows: ". . . the amount of fish (A) which will return the greatest overall benefit to the Nation, with particular reference to food production and recreational opportunities; and (B) which is prescribed as such on the basis of the maximum sustainable yield from such fishery, as modified by any relevant economic, social, or ecological factor." (Emphasis Added)
 2. MFCMA National Standard 7 [Sec. 301(a)(7)] states: "Conservation and management measures shall, where practicable, minimize costs and avoid unnecessary duplication."
 3. i.e., The return to the resource as a factor of production in addition to capital and labor.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE ECONOMIC STABILITY, GROWTH AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN MARITIME COMMUNITIES.

For existing as well as developing fisheries, consideration shall be given to how management programs will affect the economic conditions of maritime communities. A maritime community is a coastal community whose structure, in part, depends on regional fishery resources and related industries. Improving the opportunity for these maritime communities to enhance their self-sufficiency will benefit the Region and the Nation. As mandated by National Standard 4 of the MFMCA, actions under this goal will not discriminate among residents of different States.

Economic conditions will be enhanced by:

1. stabilizing the flow of fishery-related revenues through a community so that revenues occur during longer and more regular periods of time throughout the year. This is more beneficial than short, intermittent bursts of activity;
2. maximizing recreational and subsistence opportunities and associated economic benefits.
3. increasing the opportunities for fishery-related economic activity; and thereby
4. fuller and more consistent utilization of fishery resources.
5. extending, within biological limits, the availability of fishery resources to the industry over the longest feasible season. This strategy recognizes that maximum benefits from a fishery may be generated by rationalizing harvest effort and product flow to market which will tend to:
 - a. discourage overcapitalization;
 - b. minimize waste;
 - c. minimize gear conflicts;
 - d. prevent overfishing;
 - e. minimize cost of management;
 - f. minimize costs of labor and operations;
 - g. encourage wise planning;
 - h. provide a steady supply of high quality/reasonably priced fishery products to consumers;
 - i. stabilize the seafood industry and associated maritime communities.

GOAL 4: ACHIEVE OPTIMUM UTILIZATION BY THE U.S. FISHING INDUSTRY OF FISHERY RESOURCES IN THE FISHERY CONSERVATION ZONE OFF ALASKA.

This goal recognizes the economic importance of this nation's fishery resources and the need for U.S. citizens to reap full benefits of those resources, with, however, full recognition of harvest rights of other jurisdictions to fair sharing of transboundary stocks.

Issues and concerns that may be addressed under this goal include:

1. U.S. balance of trade deficits;
2. domestic processing capabilities and economic incentives;
3. fluctuations in employment in maritime communities;
4. equitable allocation among domestic user groups;
5. development of underutilized fisheries;
6. domestic vs. foreign markets;
7. tax incentives (or disincentives);
8. capabilities of domestic fleets;
9. open entry vs. limited access;
10. implementation of "fish and chips";
11. promotion of non-commercial domestic marine fisheries.

GOAL 5: MINIMIZE THE CATCH, MORTALITY, AND WASTE OF NON-TARGET SPECIES, AND
REDUCE THE ADVERSE IMPACTS OF ONE FISHERY ON ANOTHER.

This goal intends to encourage the development of gear and techniques that reduce the catch of non-target species. Management should strive to reduce or eliminate non-productive or damaging by-catches and sources of conflict between fisheries. In addressing this goal, it should be recognized that a by-catch is in fact an allocation from the optimum yield of the by-catch species. Decisions concerning such allocations must take into account, along with other factors, the comparative costs and benefits to competing fisheries of any such allocations.

Issues and concerns that may be addressed under this goal include:

1. by-catch waste of fish with negative impact on other fisheries;
2. gear conflicts;
3. competition for fishery grounds;
4. timing of seasons;
5. conflict for harvesting, processing or support capabilities;
6. gear impact on habitat.

GOAL 6: SUPPORT EFFORTS BY THE U.S. INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP NEW FISHERIES FOR UNDERUTILIZED SPECIES, WHILE MINIMIZING THE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON EXISTING U.S. FISHERIES.

Fishery management measures should promote and support the economic viability of existing U.S. fisheries to the greatest extent practicable. The domestic development of underutilized fisheries should not be permitted to interfere with traditional U.S. fisheries except when overriding and significant economic or social benefits to the Region and the Nation can be demonstrated.

Issues and concerns that may be addressed under this goal include:

1. the present share of the resource available to existing fisheries;
2. the economic and social stability in fisheries and communities.
3. gear or ground competition caused by the developing fishery;
4. the timing of fisheries that cause conflicts for processing or support capabilities;
5. the development of techniques that minimize the conflict between existing and developing fisheries.

GOAL 7: TO THE EXTENT CONSISTENT WITH OTHER COMPREHENSIVE GOALS PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC HEALTH OF THE DOMESTIC FISHING INDUSTRY: ENCOURAGE THE PROFITABLE DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERUTILIZED RESOURCES: DISCOURAGE UNNEEDED INVESTMENTS IN FISHERIES WITH EXCESS HARVESTING CAPACITY.

This can be accomplished by creating a healthy business environment that encourages investments and provides a reasonable opportunity to generate profits comparable to other high risk variable industries.

Issues and concerns that may be addressed under this goal include:

1. fishery management should endeavor to provide stable populations of raw material (within the limits of natural fluctuations) harvested during periods when those populations are in prime marketable condition.
2. fishery management strategies shall consider harvesting and processing capacities and market demands.
3. tax incentives and subsidy programs should be examined and coordinated to guard against overcapitalization but, at the same time, to provide assistance to developing fisheries and for competing with heavily subsidized foreign fishing activity.
4. evaluation of shipping and trade regulations that may impede expansion of the domestic fishing industry, and promotion of reforms as needed.
5. evaluation and employment of appropriate management strategies, such as reduction of regulated inefficiencies, control of investment incentives, and limited entry as a means of effort management.
6. regulations should be reasonably consistent through time and area. Abrupt changes in seasons, areas, gear limitations, fish size, etc. create hindrances that detract from a healthy and attractive business environment.

GOAL 8: STRENGTHEN FISHERIES RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND ANALYSIS TO ENSURE A SOUND INFORMATION BASE FOR COUNCIL DECISIONS.

This goal addresses the need for an adequate information base for decision making which:

- (1) includes relevant biological, economic, and social information;
- (2) is properly formatted and documented;
- (3) is provided early in the decision-making process to allow adequate analysis, public review and application to issues of concern.

Issues and concerns that may be addressed under this goal include:

- (1) assurance that fishery management decisions are based upon biological, economic and social information and not catch data only;
- (2) establishing procedures to provide an adequate data base from the domestic fishing industry;
- (3) assuring industry participation in development of the information base to assure adequate scope and timeliness of information programs;
- (4) providing specific mandates to fishery agencies to fund, develop, and maintain an adequate information base.

GOAL 9: IMPROVE THE FLEXIBILITY, TIMELINESS AND EFFICIENCY OF FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES.

This goal recognizes current impediments to effective and timely implementation of fishery regulations because of unwieldy administrative requirements for FMP approval. It also recognizes the need to remove unnecessary impediments to management while still retaining straight-forward processes for public review of management proposals.

Issues and concerns that may be addressed under this goal include:

- (1) Council procedures must foster timely decisive action at minimum cost to participants in the process.
- (2) management policies must be formulated and decisions made at the Regional level, with due consideration for National concerns;
- (3) rulemaking processes must be responsive to changing conditions in the resource or the fisheries;
- (4) unnecessary delays in rulemaking must be minimized to reduce confusion and inefficiencies in the fisheries;
- (5) fishery management requires development of framework procedures and other mechanisms to assure prompt responses to fisheries problems;
- (6) review processes must be simplified to reduce management costs and stabilize the investment environment in fisheries;
- (7) efficient and timely licensing processes must be promoted.